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ABSTRACT

This instructional feasibility study discusses topics and concerns as they relate to the development of a library user program for the student of foreign language and literature, provides insights on the issues of foreign language academic instruction, and addresses the local concerns of the University of Toledo. The needs of students as perceived by the faculty teaching Spanish and German in the Department of Foreign Languages are emphasized, and a plan of action for the extension of bibliographic instruction to the student and the Department of Foreign Languages is proposed. There are 22 references. (Author/RAA)

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TITLE: BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUCTION TO THE STUDENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE : A FEASIBILITY STUDY

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUCTION TO THE STUDENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE : A FEASIBILITY STUDY

ABSTRACT

Topics and concerns as they relate to the development of a library user program for the student of foreign language and literature are discussed. Insights are presented on the issues of foreign language academic instruction in general and on the concerns at the University of Toledo. Emphasis is on the needs of the students as perceived by the faculty teaching Spanish and German in the Department of Foreign Languages. A plan of action for the extension of bibliographic instruction to the student and Department of Foreign Languages of the University of Toledo is summarized.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUCTION TO THE STUDENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE : A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Feasibility for the purpose of this study may be defined as an assessment of the various aspects and problems related to the extension of a bibliographic instruction program[1] mainly to the student of foreign language and literature[2] to ensure its successful implementation.[3]

This report is organized into five parts: (1) a presentation of preliminaries -- methodology, assumptions and purpose of the study; (2) a summary discussion of background aspects and topics; (3) insights on issues in the academic teaching of foreign languages; (4) insights on the University of Toledo situation, and needs of the student as perceived by the teaching faculty; and (5) suggestions for bibliographic instruction to the students of foreign languages at the University of Toledo.

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

(A). A selective review of the literature to uncover as many background topics and problems as they relate to the offering of bibliographic instruction to the student of foreign languages mainly.[4]

(B). Development of background rationale for devising bibliographic instruction program suitable for the student of foreign languages.

(C). Interview with the faculty of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature to assess problems and needs of the student of foreign languages for such a program.

(D). Mail inquiry on the availability and development of similar programs at selected institutions of higher learning.[5]

It seemed proper to first explore ideal and general concepts in relation to a bibliographic instruction program and then collect data at a local level for the practical application of these concepts.

Assumptions

(A). The program is to attempt to obtain results leading to the use of skills developed by students while in school and, after graduating during their professional lives.

(B). Basic library skills are essential for professional development. All students will be presented the opportunity to develop their library skills to the required level of competence.

(C). Such a program is to be flexible to respond to changing needs and to allow for alternatives. It serves a changing population in which changes are to be monitored.

(D). For the success of the program, it is necessary to persuade the teaching and library faculty of its necessity; and to involve, whenever feasible, faculty and administration in its implementation and evaluation.

(E). Educational change cannot be achieved withouth psychological and mechanical preparedness for it. Problems are anticipated no matter how much preparation, due to the difficulty of bringing about change.

(F). Some procedures will have to be modified under working conditions.

(G). The funding for the human and materials resources is available to meet the budgetary needs that will occur when the user education program is extended to these types of students.

(H). There is commitment to adopt innovative practices if needed to extend this program.

(I). Library user program is a vital part of the University's educational program.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the various aspects and issues related to extending bibliographic instruction to the student of foreign languages, and to suggest a plan of action for this program at the University of Toledo.

BACKGROUND ASPECTS AND TOPICS

Objectives

The objectives of a bibliographic instruction program for the student of foreign languages are to prepare the student to effectively use the library and its resources, in general; to instruct on how to use the library as it relates to his/her field of specialization; to make the instructional program allow for the differences in educational background and for it to use a variety of methods to provide information gathering skills experience; and to develop instructional materials to meet the special needs of the student.

Functions

The basic supporting functions required for the development of a bibliographic instruction program are the instructional functions, dealing with the establishment of objectives, delivery methods, production of materials, etc.; the managerial functions, involving the generation of data, budgets, selection and development of personnel, dissemination of information, etc.; and the evaluative functions, concerned with the review and adaptation of the program.

Phases

Three distinguishable educational phases are recognized as being a phase of orientation to the library and services to the newcomer a phase of instruction in the use of the library for the student assigne library related coursework; and a phase of particularly designed instructio for the student with specialized library and information needs.

Instructional Aspects

(A). Unless, not feasible, instructional strategy and evaluation of results will be based on observable and measurable objectives.

(B). The instructional phases are arranged to meet the education needs usually developing from a general to a more specialized level of proficiency. Individualized and group instruction may cut across all phases. Despite the advantages of certain methods of instructional delivery, an eclectic approach is necessary for the program's university wide acceptance, and for meeting the educational needs.

(C). Instructional activities are planned for the student's development of library skills involving subject matter as well as attitudes.

(D). Instruction is provided within an environment which facilitates interaction between the student and the instructional staff.

(E). Specialized instructional materials are designed if needed.

(F). Library faculty and staff receive in-service training to prepare them for instructional and/or support tasks, if needed.

Population/Problems

A continuous assessment of the population to be served, of the instructional staff and resources available, and of research in the

field, shows the demands for this program.

Special developments and problems in relation to such a program that have to be managed are presssure and increase in reference services, and use of library personnel, space, hardware, facilities, etc.; lack of time to develop proper instructional materials, leadership and staff; training personnel for development of special skills; poor inter-departmental communication and relations; and the changing of library policies and practices.

The involvement of the teaching faculty which provides for their acceptance of the user education philosophy and practice is a challenging part of the program.

Relevance/Assessment

An information data base for record keeping and program monitoring is needed to identify data for educational purposes.

Also, the record of performance criteria, instructional alternatives used, demands of faculty/library time, facilities, equipment, and research data serves as the basis for the program review. Faculty reports, student/faculty feedback, interviews (solicited and unsolicited), observations, tests results, support system views, etc., provide materials for a continuous assessment. An evaluation is needed as guidance to revisions, the upgrading of materials and procedures, and for judging the overall efficiency of the program.

Immediate relevancy is effected by changes in the program through evaluation; research; student, faculty and support personnel feedback and coordination with other parallel bibliographic instruction activities. Far-reaching relevancy is achieved by the redefinition of

the bibliographic instruction program's purpose, after determining whether the students and faculty are pleased with the educational process. The exploration and use of efficient methods contributes to educational high quality.

Results

The design, development and testing of basic materials; administrative commitment, motivated faculty, library interdepartmental cooperation, and cooperation between the library and academic faculty are needed for the success of the program.

If such a success is achieved, the bibliographic instruction program will reveal some results in terms of teaching and learning outcomes, possible modification of librarian and teacher roles, weighing the factors that lead to efficient instruction, and examination of the administrative organization and logistics that support instruction, among others.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
GENERAL ISSUES

Through the examination of selected literature and from interviews with the respective faculty at the University of Toledo, some issues that may have implications to bibliographic instruction are identified.

Foreign Language Requirement

Nationwide there has been a trend toward a reduction of enrollment in foreign language courses, and elimination of the foreign language requirement for degrees. [6]

Observations noted are a very high early drop-out rate by students after a couple of semesters of elective foreign language courses; [7] a diverse high school background in the student population of foreign languages; [8] a student lack of incentive and accomplishment; [9] and loss of enthusiasm as foreign language education progresses, perhaps from boredom in the educational process; [10] and no challenge to independent thinking in literature courses. [11]

Faculty and student populations have held the foreign language requirement under scrutiny [12] with a controversy resulting among educators on the matter. The review of priorities and use of alternative teaching methods plus the defense by educators of the importance of learning foreign languages were the positive results of this controversy. [13]

Need For Foreign Language Skills

There is evidence that the need for knowledge of foreign languages is growing: the increase in the publication of nonEnglish scientific magazines which constitute fifty per cent of at least one to two million published technical articles. As shown by some studies, the impression that all foreign language literature of value is available in English is unwarranted. As international communication needs are being felt at the societal level, the teaching of foreign languages fulfills these needs. The problems related to the foreign language requirement do not necessarily imply insufficient interest or need. [14]

Teaching

Foreign language instruction problems reflect the problems of the American educational system in general. The viability of the educational curricula and methods, and the ability to hold interest and motivate are

to be questioned, not the student. Language learning has to be considered from a practical viewpoint in terms of suitability to time and space. The foreign language program has to respond to student needs. [15]

Students feel the need for reevaluation of all instructional materials and that books used for intermediate courses have no educational relevance while materials used on the lower courses do not take into consideration the variety of the student population. There is a need for adaptable classroom techniques. [16] Despite their questionable value in the overcoming of crosscultural differences, lectures are commonly used. Other involvement techniques should be used with better prepared presentations. [17]

Foreign language literature courses should, in general, use methods to challenge students such as written and oral reports, with discussion following term papers, and choice of topics to be made by students. Advanced courses should discuss provocative ideas. [18]

Some new patterns in foreign language programs have been suggested or have emerged. Besides the traditional continuing course, there is the terminal course that covers matters of interest to the student. [19] The interdisciplinary course, language camp, festival, intensive study, etc., are other examples. Diversified learning through conversation, reading, singing, listening, radio, film, drama, translation, library research, independent study, group and social activities, etc. -- is an objective. [20]

At the same time, there is a need for keeping up with the research in the field. Teachers of foreign languages in the secondary schools are not able to evaluate primary research and the validity of its findings. [21] Of note is that general research, library research, and independent study

are possible methods of assisting in the development of teaching and learning skills.

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

General

Most of the concerns on the national level are reflected on the local level such as the cancelling of the foreign language requirement, the reduction of enrollment in foreign language courses, and the changing of teaching methods and programs to increase relevance.

Course Offerings (as published in the Bulletin of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Bulletin of the Graduate School, 1977-79)

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature offers courses in French, German, Greek, Latin, Russian and Spanish languages and literatures. An analysis of the French, German and Spanish courses for an undergraduate major shows the main emphases of courses directed toward language conversation, reading and composition; survey of literature civilization, special authors, special forms and periods in the literature and language; study abroad; methods of literary scholarship; play production; and independent study and research on special problems.

At the graduate master level, courses in general may be categorized as advanced writing, reading, oral practice; literature, authors; research, bibliography and literary interpretation; seminar on selected topics; foreign study; teaching of language; and independent study.

The department offers a 'master of arts' and a 'master of arts and education' degrees. Students may present a thesis to obtain these degrees.

Needs

Emphasis here is on the needs of the students of foreign languages as perceived by the faculty teaching Spanish and German in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. These needs are presented in summary form. Most of other library related comments expressed during the interviews are included.

Faculty A. Personal interview.

There is a definite need for instruction in the use of the library.

Teaching of library research skills is needed especially for graduate students.

In the past, the department offered a course on the introduction to graduate work where these skills were taught. Lack of time and problems in scheduling led to the cancellation of the course.

Undergraduate students also need to be taught how to use the library.

Library instruction should be carried out by the library and not by the teaching faculty.

Very positive interview.

Faculty B. Quick personal exchange on the surveying of the faculty on students needs.

This is a very useful undertaking.

Would encourage all the faculty to participate.

Faculty C. Telephone interview.

Graduate students seem to know what to do, perhaps picking it up from other course work requirements.

Gives students a bibliography providing call numbers and does not require the use of the card catalog.

There is a need for the ability to locate periodicals in the library and to know about reserve materials.

Undergraduate students might have more needs than undergraduates in relation to library work.

It is useful for students to know about indexing tools, card catalog, special entries, etc., develop independence for future professional life.

Faculty D. Personal interview.

Students have no knowledge of library and skills.

They have no knowledge of Dewey and Library of Congress systems, interlibrary loan, and search strategy.

They are unable to find materials in the library.

The library is weak in foreign language periodicals but it is adequate in books.

He himself needs updating on library changes and services.

Presentations are made to the students by the Language Laboratory director on how to use the laboratory. Same should be done in relation to the use of the library.

Very positive interview.

Faculty E. Personal interview.

Students don't know how and where to find periodicals.

As a matter of fact, they cannot find anything in the library.

There is ignorance of bibliography and indexes.

Student should learn to work independently and have freedom to do research.

These needs were perceived by the questions posed by students: there is need and desire to learn.

Time is wasted by students by not knowing the proper procedures.

There is no awareness of periodical literature; thinking is in terms of books only.

There is no knowledge of how to put a paper together; there are strong style needs.

Attempt at teaching library and research skills himself showed poor results in terms of time used.

A paper and oral report are required at the graduate level.

The department should have a bibliography course; a course in research methods. Knowledge in doing research is to be acquired at the undergraduate levels as preparation for graduate work.

Is delighted that the library is going in this direction.

Very positive interview.

Faculty F. Personal interview.

Program has a small enrollment.

The filing in the card catalog is inadequate.

Students cannot find materials. The instructor has to go the library and show the card in the card catalog.

The cataloging of foreign language publications is not as good as it could be.

Students are afraid to show their ignorance by asking questions.

Materials are not on the shelves and are neither circulating. It is a pity because the library has nice holdings for the program.

There are some students working in the library who become 'instructors/explainers' of the library to the other students.

There is not a strong requirement for library skills, paper writing, and research for the undergraduate courses.

A thorough knowledge of what and where in the library

is applicable at this level. A list of books and reference sources (with call numbers), etc. is provided to the student. At this level the instructor likes the student to use his/her time learning the language.

The higher level courses, specialized literature courses, require papers with preparation of a bibliography and the following of a proper style.

There is no idea of form, bibliography, etc.

The reference works available in the library are sufficient for the program needs.

It is a wonderful idea to develop a library program to instruct students in the use of the library and its services.

Positive interview.

Faculty G. Telephone interview.

Students to not seem to have difficulty with their papers and assignments.

Papers are well presented bibliographically, style, etc., for the graduate bibliography course.

At the beginning course level students are provided with a bibliography of materials in the library to use.

At the undergraduate course level students hunt their own materials and have no obvious difficulty.

They seem to be able to use the Kardex file for serials and end up with what they need.

Faculty H. Personal interview.

Beginning course level students are required to use slides in the Technological Media Center.

Civilization courses, at the 300 level, require the presentation of a paper which involves some cultural, historical and music reading.

Students select topics to be approved by the instructor.

Both 300 and 400 level students have problems with the use of periodicals, indexes, how to write a term paper, style, etc.

There is a need for a bibliography course to be offered at the undergraduate level.

It is up to the department to decide whether this course is to be offered.

Foreign language continuing education students do not need instruction in the use of the library. Course work is voluntary with no credit or grade involved. There is no academic interest. The assistance of the reference librarian is sufficient.

Library should have translations of works available.

An idea would be for the bibliographic instructors or a representative to meet with the continuing education faculty at their fall meeting and explain what is available to them.

Technological Media Center had a workshop offered them to show what was available to them for educational purposes.

The needs of the continuing education student of other subjects might be different as far as the use of the library is concerned.

Faculty I. Personal interview.

Teaches a bibliography and method course.

Few graduate students are involved but is willing to let bibliographic instructors take over the bibliographic aspects of the course.

Students of the 214 intermediate course start reading the language and might need to use the library.

Filing and arrangement in the card catalog could be improved.

Very positive interview.

Other Comments

It seems that the foreign language requirement is about to be reinstated.

The form in which this reinstatement occurs will have some effect on the enrollment in foreign language courses.

Graduate enrollment of foreign languages at this point is not very high.

Library's Viewpoint

There is a need for instruction in the use of the library. The library is a very important source for research in the humanities. It holds scholarly resources and makes services available, but because of its complexity, time saving and quality improvement aspects, there is a need for instruction in its use. The methodological and curricular changes requiring more independent use of resources, along with interdisciplinary approaches, has led to the need of this kind of instruction.[22]

Library research may be used as a means to revitalize and diversify the teaching of foreign languages. Indirectly, the use of the library is basic to the adoption of many other methods mentioned that could be used to achieve these same results.

Objectives

The objectives of bibliographic instruction for the student of foreign languages are parallel to those for the students of other fields of learning.

(1) The student will be introduced to the library and its

resources.

(2) At appropriate levels, the student will be introduced on how to use the library and its resources, in general, and how it relates to his/her field of specialization, in particular.

(3) The selection of methods, types, materials of instruction, services, etc., will be flexible to adapt to different and changing methodological approaches in the teaching of foreign languages.

Population

Students at the undergraduate and graduate level and faculty.

SUMMARY PLAN OF ACTION

(A). Approach first those faculty members who in the interview, showed positive attitude toward instruction in the use of the library. For the Spanish and German languages and literatures these are faculty members A, B, D, E, F, H, and I.

(B). Possibilities of instruction are:

(1). To students.

(a) Class presentation of bibliographic aspects either as a single occurrence or accompanying the class at time of need such as related instruction; (b) the offer of a course for undergraduate students of the type which introduces them to methods, research skills either taught by the subject specialist or in conjunction with the teaching faculty; and (c) attempt to sell the concept of integrated instruction to the most enthusiastic members or perhaps to the chairman of the department. Faculty member I is interested in the library assuming the specific aspects of the bibliography course that he/she teaches. However, of note here is that although there is strong interest, there are few students involved.

(2). To faculty.

(a) Seminar/presentation to faculty of the department. Do inquiry to find intensity of interest and attempt the best scheduling; (b) seminar/presentation to continuing education faculty who teach foreign languages.

(3) An alternative is to attempt to organize the instruction of students of foreign languages, as a whole, working in cooperation with selected faculty and the chairman of the department to obtain their approval. Because of low enrollment, this is an important consideration, at least for the students on the graduate level.

(C). Subject specialist, or alternative instructor, is to be well prepared on bibliographic matters as they refer to foreign languages and with a well thought plan before approaching the faculty and chairman on the matter of bibliographic instruction.

(D). Instructional materials.

(1). Adapt general use instructional materials to give emphasis to aspects of special interest to the student of foreign languages. For example, the self guided tour; map or plan emphasizing the locations, resources, services of importance to the learning of foreign languages; fact sheets to use as examples authors, titles, subjects, etc., of pertinence to foreign languages whenever applicable.

(2) Develop special bibliographic instructional materials. Some examples obtained from LOEX are the Selected List of Dictionaries in the Library (University of Louisville); Guide to Resources for Spanish Literature (University of Louisville); Some Sources of Information on Mexican-Americans (University of Colorado); Guide to the Use of Germanistik, an International Quarterly Review (University of Calgary); World Literature, a Word of Explanation (University of Mainland);

Guide to Reference Materials in Comparative and General Literature (University of British Columbia); Selective Guide to German Studies (Middlebury College).

(E). Use as target for specialized bibliographic instruction the courses that require strong use of library/resources and skills.

Some of these courses on the undergraduate and graduate levels are: 415, Spanish, Research Methods and Materials; German, Methods of Literary Scholarship -- 491, Spanish, Problems in Spanish Literature; German, Problems in German Literature -- 515, Spanish, Research Methods and Materials; German, Research, Bibliography and Literary Interpretation -- 516, 517, Spanish; German: Teaching Colloquia -- 591, Spanish, Problems in Spanish Literature; German, Problems in German Literature -- 671, Spanish, German: Seminar, Selected Topics -- 691, Spanish, Research in Spanish; German, Research in German.

Literature courses usually require reading and presentation of a paper, and are also good targets for this type of instruction.

Language courses are the least amenable to bibliographic instruction since they require the least specialized use of library and resources, except for types of dictionaries and glossaries.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. In general terms, bibliographic instruction may be understood to include those activities to teach either formally or informally the patron to use the library and its resources.
2. It will be referred to as foreign languages throughout.
3. This does not show intention to preclude the need for continuous assessment.
4. "Bibliographic Instruction: A Checklist of the Literature, 1931-1975," "Library Orientation and Instruction, 1973-1977" (as published in the Reference Services Review); ERIC Resources in Education (1969-June 1978) and Education Index, 1970-1978, were the sources searched.
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18. Newton, Teaching Contemporary German Literature, pp. 38-40.
19. Rivers, Conservation and Innovation, p. 49.

20. Ibid., p. 51.

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